Handi-Lift Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes July 20, 2011

This meeting took place immediately following the meeting of the Jackson ADA Advisory Council meeting. The meeting was held in the conference room of the Hood building on S. President Street. Attending today's meeting were: Dr. Scott Crawford, Chairperson; Rev. Sam Gleese, City ADA Coordinator; Dr. Christy Dunaway, LIFE of Mississippi; Mr. Alphonso Burns, President of Local Union 1208; Ms. Traci Brent, City of Jackson Public Transit; Mr. Sam Tensley, JATRAN General Manager (PTM); Kay Hardage, Esq., Disability Rights of Mississippi; Lee Cole, Jason Bunch, Karen Robinson, Namon Hulitt, Jackie Washington and Willie Cook.

- I. Dr. Dunaway read the minutes from the most recent meeting. Ms. Brent commented that although the minutes reflected that the City would be receiving new software and new buses sometime in October, it would not necessarily be October 6 as stated. There was some clarification regarding the completion of the Policy and Procedures manual for JATRAN. Dr. Crawford asked if a cover letter had been completed to send out to the riders with the manual. Mr. Tensley responded that everything will be reviewed after the legal department has seen it and approved it. Dr. Crawford commented that he is particularly concerned with the language of the manual and he wants to ensure that there is little or no technical language or "legalese." Ms. Hardage commented that the manual and cover letter should have been finalized and sent to the JATRAN riders within 60 days of the consent decree. However, this did not happen due to the Department of Justice requesting changes, the primary change being that the Policy and Procedures manual and the Riders Guide be combined into one document. Dr. Crawford requested a motion to accept the minutes with the changes. Ms. Cole seconded and the motion carried. Dr. Crawford reminded Mr. Tensley that the flyer on the buses regarding the policies and procedures for assisting wheelchair users still needs some changes. Mr. Tensley stated that those changes had been made.
- II. Dr. Crawford stated that the Consent Decree monitoring report for the second year has been submitted. There were two major issues. One is discussed above regarding the Policy and Procedures manual. The second is the ongoing problem of capacity constraints on the Handilift buses. Mr. Thatcher with DOJ has been reviewing trip denials and reports that while JATRAN claimed to have 20-30 trip denials per month, in reality it was closer to 180 denials per month. These trip denials appear to be discouraging people from riding the Handilift. Mr. Tensley commented that there was a conference call scheduled for later in the month on the issue of capacity constraints. He also stated that if Handilift can accommodate someone within a certain time period, it is not considered a denial. If it is a true denial, they will send the individual four coupons for a free ride. Mr. Tensley believes that these discrepancies are due in part to misunderstandings and lack of knowledge, but that he guaranteed that Mr.

Thatcher's next trip will show considerable improvement. Mr. Tensley also commented that the City's legal department and the Department of Justice were aware of the problem with capacity constraints but due to budget issues, they simply could not purchase new buses and "make them appear overnight." Since the consent decree was signed Jackson has not increased our buses or the number of drivers – and they will not - until new software and computers have been purchased first. Ms. Cole stated that she hoped JATRAN would not rely solely on new software, but would also seek the drivers' input because they know the streets of Jackson and the riders well.

- III. Dr. Crawford stated that he was impressed with the improvements he saw regarding the drivers kneeling the buses for passengers.
- IV. Dr. Dunaway asked about the committee that Councilman Lumumba had established to review the transportation system. This committee has made budget recommendations, route change recommendations, etc. Dr. Crawford has requested these recommendations in a digital format. Mr. Burns with Local 1208 is working with the Councilman, providing suggestions which are passed along to city administration. Apparently Councilman Lumumba has tried to speak directly with Mr. Tensley, but has been told he cannot communicate directly with him because Mr. Tensley is a contractor of the City.
- V. Mr. Tensley informed the committee that there will be a meeting held in Council Chambers at 10:00 am this Saturday, July 23 to hear an official presentation from JATRAN staff about the proposed restructuring of the bus routes.
- VI. There being no further business, Dr. Crawford entertained a motion to adjourn. Ms. Jackie Washington made this motion, Mr. Willie Cook seconded and the meeting was adjourned.

These Minutes were prepared by Dr. Scott Crawford and approved at the September 21, 2011, meeting.